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# DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES



Brimming smiles of hope: Little child of one of our WADI farmers in Bundelkhand

Stories from our *Karmabhoomi*

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In the editorial, Dr Ashok Khosla discusses Development Alternatives (DA) working in the Bundelkhand region in 1985 under the leadership of Air Vice Marshal Surinder Sahni. He recounts the various programmes initiated by the organisation to combat poverty, restore the environment, and promote sustainable livelihoods. He says that DA's work in the region serves as a model for holistic and cost-effective interventions in impoverished regions.

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In our lead article, Shrashtant Patara speaks on how DA plans to work in Bundelkhand, the priority areas and the how of it. He speaks on how DA is committed to building a more inclusive, place-based approach into its innovation agenda for its Karmabhoomi. Emphasis is being placed on greater collaboration between actors in the regional innovation ecosystem, with people, particularly women and youth at the centre. The aim is to build a collective intelligence-enabled platform for local innovators.



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The semi-arid Bundelkhand region in Central India is facing a severe water crisis due to deforestation and dwindling water resources. Efforts to address water scarcity have been through the Bundelkhand Package and the Har Ghar Jal Mission. Vaishali Kanojia and Dr Mrittika Basu argue that to ensure the success of these initiatives, it is crucial to prioritise restoring traditional water bodies, involve local communities, support innovative solutions, promote collaboration, and implement continuous monitoring and evaluation.

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## Inclusive Entrepreneurship in Bundelkhand: A Ground Story

In 2016, Development Alternatives (DA) introduced entrepreneurship opportunities in 120 villages in Bundelkhand, with a focus on inclusive entrepreneurship, particularly for women and youth. In this article, Kethosinuo Tapa highlights DA's efforts in reshaping the region's socio-economic fabric, empowering women and youth and fostering a sustainable local economy. DA's next phase, driven by Cluster-Level Federations, aims to scale these efforts and embed social innovation within the community for continued growth and development.



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## Management of Construction and Demolition Debris: A Circularity Approach for Bundelkhand Region

The urgent need for a robust construction and demolition (C&D) waste management plan in Bundelkhand is non-negotiable. In this article, Soumen Maity explains how leveraging technology and innovation, along with government regulations and incentives, can significantly improve C&D waste management in the area. He says that striking a balance between economic development and environmental sustainability is crucial for a society to thrive.

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## Shubh Kal: The Blueprint of Resilience and Hope

Geeta Kushwaha, a farmer from Vinvara village, transformed her infertile land into a thriving orchard with the help of Radio Bundelkhand's initiative, Shubh Kal. In this article, Zainab Ahmed recounts how the campaign's focus on climate-resilient agricultural practices has made it a powerful tool for driving behaviour change and policy advocacy in vulnerable regions. Geeta's story and the success of Shubh Kal reflects the potential for positive transformation in the face of climate change, making it a vital movement for a sustainable future.



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The views expressed in the articles in this newsletter are those of the authors and not necessarily those of Development Alternatives.

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## Rebuilding Bundelkhand



TARAgam Orchha, Bundelkhand

**F**ew places on Earth exemplify better than the region of Bundelkhand in Central India the adage of 'resource curse'. Despite its enormous endowment of resource wealth – its rich deposits of minerals (including the only operating diamond mine in India) and dense forests, diverse fauna and flora; its unique history of savvy water management; its amazing monuments and forts, its brilliant, courageous people and vibrant culture – it has become the butt of the demeaning proverb to be 'as poor as Bundelkhand'. The whole region, comprising 14 contiguous districts spread over Southern Uttar Pradesh and Northern Madhya Pradesh, today languishes in a slowly swinging hammock suspended between a languid hope-filled past and an active, hope-fulfilled future.

It was in 1985 that Air Vice Marshal Surinder Sahni, recently retired from a distinguished and highly decorated career in the Indian Air Force, approached Development Alternatives (DA) with the proposition of opening a 'branch' of DA near Jhansi, where he had been born and raised, in the hope of returning to his roots and helping the people of the region to fulfill their aspirations and create

an ambience for the local youth to reach their potential. His aim was to help them restore the productivity of their resources and the wellbeing of their communities.

By 1990, DA had set up a vibrant programme of activities in several districts of Bundelkhand, under the leadership of AVM Sahni, who unleashed a broad-based blitz attack on poverty through programmes to bring back the forests, rejuvenate the soils and crops, regenerate local economies through creation of sustainable livelihoods and construction of eco-houses, and, above all, revive the water management systems that had been pioneered by the Bundela kingdoms four hundred years earlier but had since been destroyed under predatory colonial tax regimes and largely forgotten since.

Around 1992, DA had established enough of a reputation to attract the attention of the then Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Mr Digvijay Singh, who travelled all the way to Orchha and presented DA with 10 acres of land and inaugurate an Innovation and Action hub/campus that came to be known throughout Bundelkhand, India and indeed the World, as 'TARAgam'.



Air Vice Marshal Surendra Sahni with Dr Ashok Khosla

During the following years, local communities, under the guidance of AVM Sahni and his DA teams, built hundreds of 'check dams' to slow the stream flows during the monsoons, making perennial the many rivers that were dry for most of the year, recharging the underground aquifers, and creating the possibility of an extra one or two crops each year – leading to huge increases in household incomes, health and wellbeing. The modernised cropping choices, production of natural fertilisers, and construction of dams, houses, and infrastructure led, of course, to the creation of numerous additional livelihoods and incomes, reducing the pressure to out-migrate.

In his second career of almost 30 years, as Vice President and Senior Advisor of DA, AVM Sahni proceeded to bring his enormous insight, initiative, and intense energy to set up a massive programme for restoring and rebuilding the social and natural processes in the districts around Jhansi – Lalitpur, Tikamgarh, Datia, Orchha and

others – resulting in major and measurable improvement in the lives and livelihoods of the people and in the productivity of their land, water, and biological resources.

This issue of the newsletter is a tribute to the work of AVM Sahni and the cohorts of young colleagues he brought on board – many successive DA squadrons, trained and nurtured by him and his very dedicated senior colleagues in DA into a potent force for community transformation, environmental regeneration, and economic sustainability.

The DA Family hopes that our work in Bundelkhand can serve as a model for the kind of holistic, systemic interventions that can, at remarkably modest cost, make even the poorest regions of India, and indeed the world, gain for themselves a more prosperous and sustainable future. □

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# Innovation for a Resilient Bundelkhand

The “Heartland of India”, Bundelkhand, has nurtured some of the richest biodiversity, wildlife, including tigers and leopards, pasture lands and water harvesting structures built by Bundela and Chandela dynasties. Despite it’s once rich natural and cultural heritage, the region is now synonymous with socio-economic backwardness.

Development Alternatives has been active in the Bundelkhand region for over the past three decades, maintaining a direct presence in Niwari and Datia districts of Madhya Pradesh as well as Jhansi district in Uttar Pradesh and extending its outreach in other districts in collaboration with network partners.

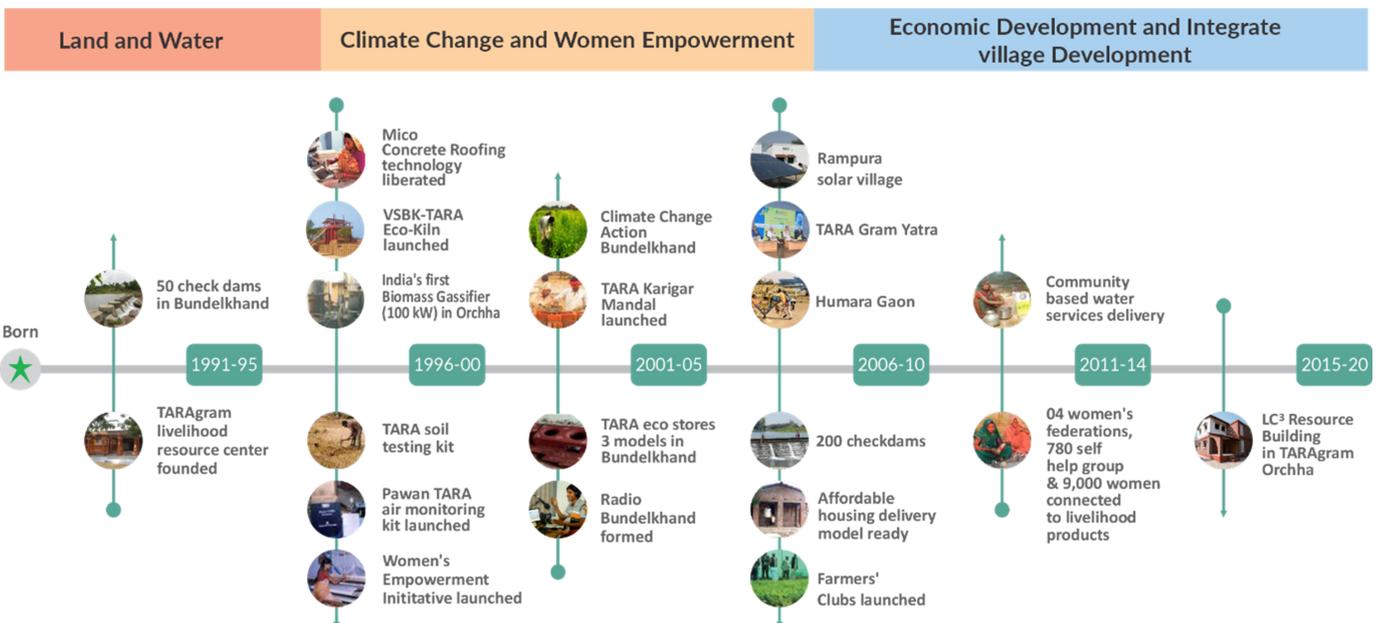
Key challenges encountered in the region include seasonal migration due to diminishing job opportunities, outdated skills, lack of infrastructure, eroding institutional systems, gender inequities and adverse impact of climate change. To address these issues, DA, its sister organization TARA and our business affiliates have adopted a multi prong strategy, responding to the challenges with a bouquet of solutions that transect the three organizational impact areas of Livelihood Security & Inclusive Entrepreneurship,

Resource Efficiency & Circular Economy and Climate Resilience & Ecosystem Restoration.

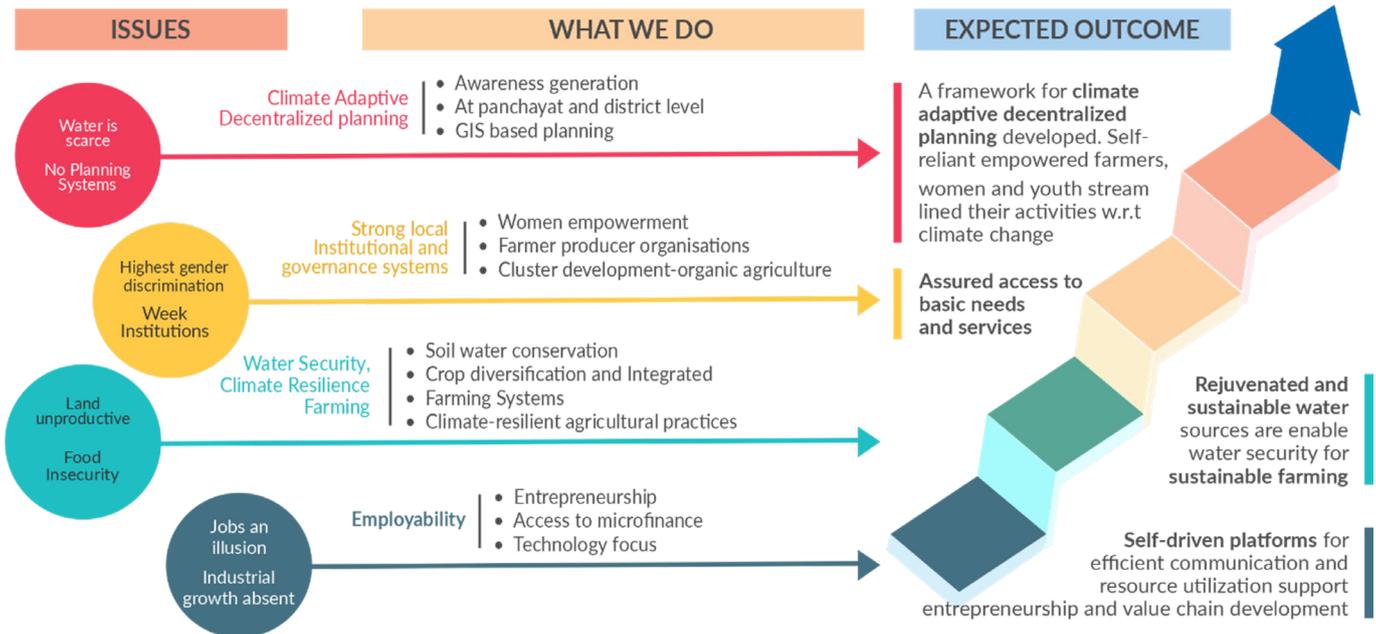
Innovation, driven by local imperatives and our ambition to promote sustainable, scalable solutions, has been the foundation upon which over half a million people have benefitted in the last three decades.

Flagship initiatives include:

- **“Water for All, Always”**, in which rejuvenated and sustainable water sources are enabling water security for sustainable farming and other community needs. Structures such as check-dams, tanks and ponds, gabions and gully plugs, originally used by farmers in Bundela kingdoms 600 years ago, are carefully designed with active participation of local communities, combining the best of traditional knowledge with scientific planning tools such as satellite imagery for mapping topography and land use, and hydrological science for mapping aquifers. There are few technologies in the world that can compete with these water harvesting structures in terms of return on investments or generating social, environmental and economic value.



# Approach



- **“Sustainable Agri-horticulture”**, based on solutions that link smallholder farmers to appropriate eco-technologies - providing technical support, conducting farmers training through promotion of the WADI model and adoption of climate resilient farming practices. The WADI is an agri-horti model that ensures a year-round income to small and marginal farmers. Backyard farm plots in which farmers grow cereals, pulses, vegetables and fruits provide an effective solution to improve nutritional security, enhance incomes, while also helping to regenerate the natural resource base.
- **“Employability and Entrepreneurship”**, driven by diversification in income generating opportunities for economic resilience. Building skills for employment and non-farm entrepreneurship through the use of social innovation tools and methods is emerging as an effective approach for sustainable development of the region. The potential of driving growth through green and inclusive micro enterprises is immense. Besides promoting sustainable economic growth within local communities, enterprises additionally serve to supply basic services to rural communities that remain disconnected from mainstream markets. With the need for a multi-faceted and

innovative approach to creating systemic solutions that foster entrepreneurship, not only have enterprises been created in substantial numbers, but these have also enabled the creation of dignified jobs that cater to the needs and demands of the communities.

Looking into the future, DA is committed to building a more inclusive, place-based approach into our innovation agenda for Bundelkhand. Emphasis is being placed on greater collaboration between actors in the regional innovation ecosystem, with people, particularly women and youth at the centre. We aim to build a collective intelligence enabled platform for local innovators that will perform the following functions:

- Provide an experience sharing platform, source of knowledge bank, and forum for promotion of solutions.
- Emerge as a point of convergence for insights, information and ideas; means of linking up with multiplication partners and scale-enablers.
- Engage with key government bodies, financial institutions and the private sector. □

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## Learning from Bundelkhand: Water Crisis and Climate Change



Gurari check dam, Bundelkhand

### Introduction

**T**he Bundelkhand region, spanning across the central Indian states of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, is characterised as sub-humid and dry. This region faces severe water crises, which exacerbate its vulnerability to climate change. The challenges are marked by degraded forests, erratic rainfall, and shrinking water resources.

Bundelkhand region has diverse hydrological conditions, and its water crisis is heavily influenced by its climatic and geographical features. The region typically experiences an annual average rainfall of about 1000 mm, although this amount varies significantly. Approximately 90% of the annual rainfall occurs during the monsoon months of July and August. This high-intensity rainfall often hinders the soil's ability to absorb water adequately [1].

The region has large numbers of traditional water bodies and water storage structures built by erstwhile rulers. These are in dilapidated condition, with reduced storage and recharge capacity due to many well-known reasons. Apart from this, there are 59 large dams and tanks with approximate

reservoir areas of about 70,000 hectares and numerous small water bodies such as check dams, farm tanks, earthen bunds, etc. in the region [2]. Many of these traditional structures are non-functional and the remaining water bodies are impacted due to variability in the precipitation patterns.

The region mainly relies on unconfined aquifers in rugged terrain with secondary porosity permeability to support its groundwater. According to the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB), almost 59.317 MCM (84.72%) of precipitation results in surface runoff, leaving only 10.691 MCM (15.28%) to infiltrate the soil. This means the area has a meagre 70.008 MCM of effective water resources, highlighting the severity of water scarcity despite substantial rainfall [3]. The groundwater is abstracted by large diameter open dug wells, tube wells, and hand pumps.

In Bundelkhand, Development Alternatives (DA) has successfully implemented several innovative solutions to address the water crisis and mitigate the impacts of climate change. The approach integrates technology, infrastructure creation, community engagement, and policy advocacy to tackle these challenges.

### Some of the initiatives taken by DA:

- **Innovative Water Management Practices:** Since 1989, the construction of over 300 check dams in Bundelkhand, particularly in Jhansi (UP), Tikamgarh (MP), and Datia (MP), has been facilitated. These check dams are designed to recharge groundwater reserves and increase water availability for agricultural purposes. In addition, recharge wells and rainwater harvesting systems have been built to further enhance groundwater recharge and improve overall water availability.
- **Locally Owned Community Operated (LOCO) Model:** This model involves a community institution or group managing and operating the water supply infrastructure. A solar-powered pump draws water from a borewell, which is then stored in a large tank to ensure a continuous 24-hour supply. Water is distributed through pipelines to community stand-posts and household connections. Households contribute fees towards the maintenance of the system, ensuring its sustainability. This approach highlights the importance of securing community engagement and commitment for the long-term success of water supply projects.
- **Climate-Resilient Agriculture:** Climate-resilient farming practices are promoted through the WADI model and organic farming initiatives. Information on soil conservation and crop diversification is disseminated to farmers via platforms like Community Radio - Radio Bundelkhand. These practices help farmers adapt to changing climate conditions and improve crop yields.
- **Education and Awareness:** Workshops and community radio initiatives, such as Radio Bundelkhand, provide education and training on water conservation and climate adaptation to farmers and women. This approach equips individuals with the knowledge needed to implement sustainable practices effectively.

### Policy Perspectives

The majority of efforts to tackle water scarcity have been carried out in the framework of the Bundelkhand Package, where plans are made and implemented in a top-down manner without community involvement. The central government allocated Rs 7,266 crore in 2009 for this package [4] and an additional Rs 200 crore in 2011. The Bundelkhand Package, though it receives renewed funding every few years, is a response to immediate drought crises rather than a long-term effort to improve water security. The government's Har Ghar Jal Mission goal is to provide pure and safe piped drinking water to uncovered rural areas. Out of 4513 revenue villages in Jhansi, Mahoba, Lalitpur, Jalaun, Hamirpur, Banda, and Chitrakoot, 891 villages are already covered. The estimated investment for these initiatives is Rs 10,322.42 crore, which is expected to be invested in constructing these schemes. All targeted villages will have access to Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC) and public stand-posts where needed [5].

In order to ensure the success of government schemes, projects, initiatives and missions, as well as secure the water resources in Bundelkhand, it is imperative to incorporate lessons from Bundelkhand in formulating and implementing policies to manage the water crisis and address climate change:

1. **Emphasis on traditional water bodies:** Future policies must prioritise the restoration and maintenance of traditional water bodies like Chandela and Bundela ponds and wells.
2. **Community engagement:** Effective policies must involve local communities in decision-making processes. By incorporating community-based approaches, interventions can be more effective, and policies can be more relevant and sustainable.
3. **Innovative solutions and technologies:** Governments and institutions should support innovative solutions and technologies that address water and

climate challenges. Funding for research and development, as well as pilot projects, can drive progress and scalability.

4. **Stakeholder Consultations:** Policies should foster coordination among various stakeholders to achieve comprehensive and cohesive solutions. Addressing the water crisis and climate change requires collaboration across sectors, including agriculture, water resources, and the environment.
5. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Continuous monitoring and evaluation of policies and interventions are essential for assessing their impact and making necessary adjustments.

An integrated - local solution-driven approach that focusses on water security in the wake of climate change (erratic precipitation pattern) is the need of the hour. It is crucial that local government agencies take initiatives to restore, revive, and maintain the water bodies and foster community participation for rainwater recharging/ harnessing as feasible. □



Women at village Mador accessing water through LOCO Model

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## Inclusive Entrepreneurship in Bundelkhand: A Ground Story

**B**ack in 2016, entrepreneurship was largely unfamiliar in the villages of Bundelkhand. Development Alternatives (DA) took on the task of introducing entrepreneurship-led decent livelihood opportunities in 120 villages across four districts of the Bundelkhand region. Over the past six years, we have dispelled the myth that entrepreneurship is a last-resort livelihood option. Our efforts have enabled thousands to pursue their aspirations of setting up micro-enterprises and making entrepreneurship accessible to a wider audience. Initially, we aimed at establishing four enterprises per village within two years, but we have now gained significant momentum, with an average of one enterprise being set up every day in different blocks of the region in the last two years. Niwari serves as a prime example of this progress.

In a nation where 70% of the population lives in rural areas, fostering micro-entrepreneurship is essential to addressing the needs of the 33 million unemployed labour force in rural areas. Micro-enterprises play a major role in job creation, providing jobs for over 110 million workers. However, these enterprises are marred with a complex set of social and economic challenges, including lack of information and inaccessibility to technology and finance. Most importantly, one of the biggest challenges is that only 20% of the micro-enterprises are led by women.

There is a growing need to not only support existing enterprises but also create new ones that are inclusive in nature and sustainable in their operations. DA's approach to 'Inclusive Entrepreneurship' enables under-represented groups such as youth and women to transition from jobseekers to jobcreators. This approach provides access to entrepreneurship opportunities in underserved regions, leading to social inclusion, quality employment, and sustainable, environmentally sound economic growth.

Since 2017, DA has demonstrated the effectiveness of its participative methods to accelerate the development of micro-enterprises in Bundelkhand. Through its different entrepreneurship initiatives, it has been able to create over 4400 enterprises and support more than 1500 existing enterprises through capacity-building training, as well as facilitating access to finance, market, and technology. As a result, these enterprises have led to the creation of 7600+ decent employment opportunities in Bundelkhand. Notably, over 2700 of these enterprises are owned and managed by women.

An inspiring story comes from Rakhi Yadav, a 24-year-old entrepreneur from Simra, Jhansi. Despite facing financial constraints, she persevered by taking on roles as an assistant and driver to repay her college fees. In 2021, she seized the opportunity by opening an optical store in Ambabai, recognising the growing need for eyewear and the lack of such services in nearby villages. Her venture thrived, enabling her to secure another loan and expand with a new shop in Jhansi in 2022. Managing two branches now, she employs three youths, including Mohini, an aspiring entrepreneur



Rakhi Yadav at her optical store

who plans to start her own business after gaining valuable insights from Rakhi's experience.

DA's inclusive entrepreneurship initiatives in Bundelkhand are reshaping the region's socio-economic fabric, empowering women and youth, and fostering a resilient and sustainable local economy. The next phase, driven by Cluster-Level Federations, promises to scale these efforts, ensuring that the tools of social innovation are firmly embedded within the community, paving the way for continued growth and development. □

# Management of Construction and Demolition Debris: A Circularity Approach for Bundelkhand Region



C&D waste dumped alongside railway lines in Bundelkhand region

## The Growing Challenge

Despite efforts by municipal corporations and state government departments across the country, construction and demolition (C&D) waste remains a major unresolved issue to date. A survey by Development Alternatives (DA) estimates that C&D waste generation amounts to 716 million tonnes per year. However, there are no scientific and comprehensive figures available across cities for quantification on a regular basis through a dashboard. With increased focus on urbanisation and infrastructure, the generation of C&D waste has increased and has become an area of national concern. Based on the experiences of DA in various states, it is clearly said that there is a lack of knowledge, skills, and awareness of each and every aspect of C&D waste and its utilisation. Regulators and public representatives at the city and town levels are also not aware of the definition and various rules and regulations of C&D waste. This has led to unauthorised dumping of C&D waste in water bodies, streams, and rivers for land-filling activities, resulting in disturbance to the entire ecosystem of the city/town. This challenge is present across all types of urban

local bodies, and the cities and towns of Bundelkhand are also affected by the issue.

The need for a robust C&D waste management plan in Bundelkhand is urgent and non-negotiable. The region, which includes parts of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, has a rapidly increasing construction industry that is fuelling economic growth but also raising concerns about environmental sustainability.

Effective C&D waste management and construction dust mitigation play crucial roles in the clean air strategies outlined for the 131 non-attainment cities (NACs) governed by the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) of the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. The amount of C&D waste generated in the area depends on C&D activity levels and currently there are no standard practices for C&D waste disposal. Improper disposal of C&D waste can harm the environment, especially if dumped in ecologically sensitive areas.

## Overview of C&D Waste Management in Jhansi

in Jhansi city, unlike other Tier 1 or Tier 2 cities, C&D waste varies depending on the construction or demolition activities. The

majority of this waste can be found lying alongside the roads, dumped in forest lands, or being used for filling up low-lying areas. Individuals who generate construction waste typically hire private bullock carts or tractors to collect and dump the waste elsewhere in the city for a nominal cost. As such, there are no standard practices for the disposal of construction waste in Jhansi city. In case of a complaint, JCB loaders are used to transfer the waste as and when reported to the municipality authorities.

### Current situation

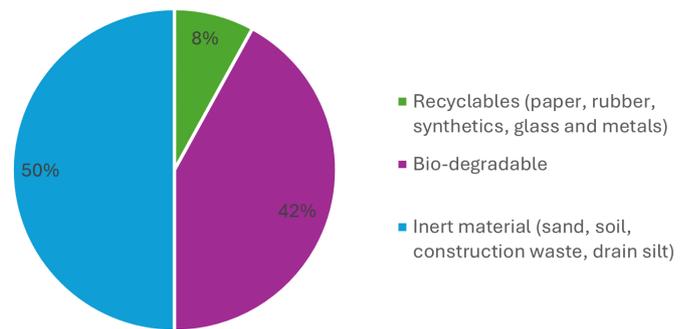
Jhansi city is divided into three distinct divisions: railway, cantonment, and municipal corporation, each governed by separate administrative bodies. The management of C&D waste varies across these divisions and is overseen by different contractors. Within the municipal corporation, contractors are tasked with managing C&D waste collection. In the Railway sector, the predominant type of waste generated is metal waste originating from railway lines. In the Cantonment area, it is looked after by the Cantonment Board and is also used to fill up low-lying areas.

In Jhansi, there is a glaring lack of disposal infrastructure for C&D waste. Contractors tasked with waste collection often resort to disposing the waste along highways or at solid waste processing sites due to the absence of designated disposal facilities. This inadequate waste management system poses significant environmental and public health concerns. Moreover, with the city undergoing development and necessitating new construction projects, several buildings are being demolished to make way for new structures. In the Cantonment zone, plans are in place to systematically demolish and renovate buildings as part of the city's development initiatives. However, the absence of proper disposal sites for C&D waste remains a pressing issue that needs to be urgently addressed to ensure sustainable development and environmental preservation in Jhansi.

### Way Forward

**Leveraging Technology and Innovation:** Quite a number of promising solutions in waste can be implemented through innovation. The use of mobile applications to track and manage waste, digital waste exchange

Percentage(%) of total waste



### Characteristics of MSW in Jhansi

Source: Nagar Nigam Jhansi, 2011

platforms, automated sorting systems, and advanced recycling technologies can significantly improve the efficiency of C&D waste management in Jhansi and the overall Bundelkhand area. Hence, sustainability is promoted when these technologies help in recycling valuable materials and reduce the volume of waste, which leads to the conservation of the environment.

**Role of government and policy:** The government plays a key role in implementing and enforcing C&D waste management policies. Bundelkhand's local authorities should develop and enforce regulations that mandate waste segregation at source, safe disposal practices, and penalties for non-compliance. Additionally, incentives such as tax rebates for companies that adhere to green building norms and use recycled materials need to be promoted to encourage sustainable practices in the construction industry.

Investment in infrastructure is a key to waste management. The facilities would not only help manage waste but also generate employment in the market.

In conclusion, the C&D waste management plan must be comprehensive, integrating regulatory measures, technological innovations, and public participation. As the Bundelkhand region continues to develop, the authorities must keep in mind that striking a balance between economic development and environmental sustainability is the real key. □

## Shubh Kal: The Blueprint of Resilience and Hope



Geeta in her fruit farm

**G**eeta Kushwaha, a 46-year-old resident of Vinvara village, faced dire circumstances when her 5-acre farmland became infertile due to erratic weather patterns in Bundelkhand. The once fertile land, where she cultivated wheat, pulses, and vegetables, could no longer sustain her family. Due to severe droughts and unseasonal rains in the region, Geeta and her family, like many small farmers in the region, had no choice but to abandon their land and migrate to the city in search of better opportunities. Their life in the city was challenging, marked by a yearning for their village and the life they had left behind.

Then, the COVID-19 pandemic struck, forcing migrants like Geeta to return to their homes. It was during this time that Geeta discovered Radio Bundelkhand, which became a beacon of hope for her. She was particularly drawn to discussions about horticulture and organic farming, which she found both educational and inspiring.

Encouraged by the ideas she heard on the radio, Geeta decided to transform her barren

land into a thriving orchard. She discussed her plan with her family, and together they embarked on the arduous journey of reviving their farm. They planted seasonal fruit trees on an acre of their land and started making organic compost at home, a technique they learned from the Shubh Kal programmes. With the modest water supply from a nearby pond, they nurtured their orchard, hoping for the best.

Geeta's story is a testament to the transformative power of community-driven initiatives like Shubh Kal. Led by Development Alternatives since 2008, Radio Bundelkhand's flagship campaign, Shubh Kal aims to build resilience among rural communities in Bundelkhand against climate change. The initiative leverages community radio to disseminate critical information about climate adaptation and mitigation strategies, bridging the gap between scientists, policymakers, and local communities.

The Shubh Kal campaign, which means 'for a better future', is a dynamic programme aimed at fostering resilience within rural

communities in Bundelkhand against the impacts of climate change. This initiative ensures that vital climate-related information and sustainable agricultural practices are communicated to those who require it the most.

Shubh Kal's achievements stem from its innovative use of 'Communication for Development' (C4D) methodologies. These methods ensure that the voices of the most vulnerable are heard and addressed. By facilitating dialogues between the farming community, scientists, and policymakers, the initiative has fostered a more inclusive approach to climate adaptation and mitigation. This collaborative effort has not only enhanced local knowledge and practices but also influenced policy decisions at higher echelons.

The Shubh Kal campaign, supported by organisations like the Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) and the Environment Planning and Coordination Organisation (EPCO), has made a positive impact on more than 600,000 people across 450 villages through its network of community radios. The campaign has enabled over 2000 farmers to adopt climate-resilient agricultural practices, positioning them as influential advocates for change within their communities.

The impact of Shubh Kal extends beyond just numbers. The campaign has garnered support from various governmental and non-governmental organisations, including the EPCO, the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Sussex,

and the Third Pole Project. The campaign's emphasis on using community radio (Radio Bundelkhand) as a platform for knowledge sharing and dialogue has set a precedent for similar interventions in other vulnerable regions. Furthermore, it has been proven as a powerful tool in driving behaviour change and policy advocacy.

Shubh Kal's journey, much like Geeta Kushwaha's, is one of hope and resilience, embodying the spirit of Bundelkhand's people. Despite the immense challenges posed by climate change, the opportunities for positive transformation are abundant. Geeta's story, along with many others, is a beacon of what is possible when knowledge, community spirit, and innovative communication converge.

As the region continues to face the brunt of climate change, Shubh Kal's work is more critical than ever. It is not just a campaign but a movement towards a sustainable future for Bundelkhand. The campaign's ongoing efforts showcase the indomitable spirit of its people and the transformative power of community-driven initiatives. As Geeta waits for the rains to nourish her orchard, she remains hopeful and grateful for the knowledge and support that Shubh Kal has provided. Her story is a powerful reminder that the time for action is now, and together, with the right tools and collective effort, a better tomorrow – a Shubh Kal – is within reach. □

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अपना रेडियो अपनी बातें

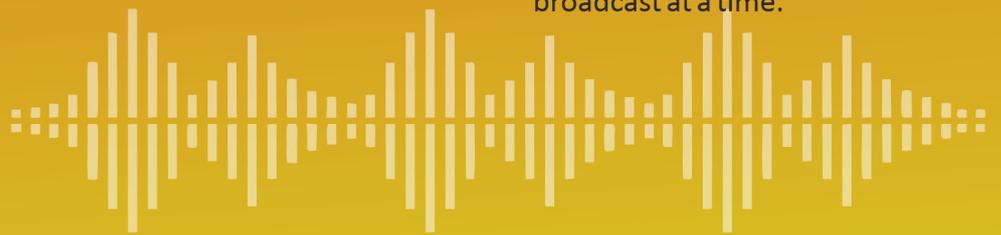
# Radio Bundelkhand

## Apna radio Apni baatein

In the heart of Bundelkhand, where every drop of water is precious, Radio Bundelkhand is your trusted companion in the journey toward a sustainable future. As a leading voice in climate communication, we empower over 150 villages across Jhansi and Niwari districts with knowledge that turns challenges into opportunities.

From stories of resilience to expert advice on water conservation, Radio Bundelkhand is more than a station—it's a movement.

Join us as we amplify the voices of Bundelkhand, bringing you the wisdom of your ancestors and the innovations of tomorrow. Together, we are building a climate-resilient community, one broadcast at a time.



For more information, contact us  
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*The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and not necessarily those of Development Alternatives (DA).  
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